LUTHER AS A REFORMER.—No. 12.

BY S. B. FURRY.

We now give Luther's opinion of the true church. "All Christians belong to the spiritual state; nothing makes us christians but the Gospel, faith and baptism. The mere fact that the Pope or bishop may annoint, smooth down, ordain and consecrate an individual, or his dressing differently from the common people, may make a hypocrite, but will never make a christian. For, as Peter says, "by baptism we all become kings and priests unto God;" and John says, in Revelations, "Thou hast made us kings and priests." Now the church is not merely wood and stone, but it is the collective body of believing christians; to these we must cling, and see how they believe, live and teach. For out of the christian church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation. Hence it follows that it must be uncertain and false, that we are to believe only in the Pope or a bishop, and follow them as our masters, for these may and often do err. But their teachings must be subject to the inspection of the collective body of christians. What they teach must be examined and judged by the congregation, and this judgment must stand, for the church must go before the preachers. But the Pope and his minions have become such tyrants, that they have entirely perverted this christian, divine and apostolic order, and haye introduced such pagan and Pythagonean customs, that they may say any foolish thing they please. In this way they have grieved the Spirit, while no one is allowed to judge or correct them, or command them to hold their peace."

Speaking of members, he says: "There are many who are baptized and hear the gospel, and go to the Lord's Supper, and yet are no Christians. But by this alone are we to know them; those only are true christians who have faith in their hearts." To distinguish from the true church, and that which has the name of being the church, and is not, he says: "The church is not such a multitude of people included within certain systems of outward forms and ceremonies, as were the Jews with the laws of Moses. Nor is it a body of men and women that must be kept together by outward human authority—nor is it at all to be bound by the ordinary succession, or government of the bishops or their successors as popery pretends." "But the church is a spiritual congregaaion, that hears the voice of the Shepherd and believes on him, and is governed by him through the Holy Ghost; and outwardly this church can only be known from the fact that she has His WORD and SACRAMENT; inwardly, however, she knows Him by faith and He knows her, even without knowing anything of the *outward form.*" This I claim, is good theology, while the following extract is equally as logical. "The true church must be separated from the other, for it is the command of God and Christ that we are to have no fellowship with such. Therefore we must separate ourselves from the popish church, notwithstanding she boasts of her church authority and offices, and condemns *us* as *schismatics* from the church. And if she should excommunicate and persecute us, on account of our preaching and our confessing Christ, then we have the decision of Christ, that *she is not the true church*, and that her offices and authority and whatever she prides herself with, will amount to nothing against *us*; but on the other hand *our* preaching," and confessing Christ, &c., "will be of great account before God in Heaven. For of this we are certain that the true church is there, where Christ's doctrine is acknowledged, and where the true church is, there is the proper church authority." These sentiments I cannot but help to endorse, for I would think it very wrong in me to commune or have spiritual fellowship with any who act out the enemy against me, either in appearance or fact; notwithstanding I would pray for them and their conversion.

Since God hath declared us to be his temple, and as such promised to dwell in us, and walk in us; and to be our God and we his people, what fellowship then shall have righteousness with unrighteousness, or light with darkness? None whatever. See 2 Cor. 6: 13, to end of chapter. But there are those who are innocent, without malice, and who, we hope, may gradually see their errors, confess Christ only, abide by his gospel, and cultivate a sufficient confidence in the Gospel as to believe it an all-sufficient law to secure our salvation. With such we can with gospel propriety be in fellowship as God's dear, and eventually, devoted children. Now, may the blessing of God rest on what I have written. And if any good may result, which I devoutly hope, to God shall be ascribed the honor and glory throughout endless ages of eternity. Amen.

Time once passed never returns; the moment which is lost is lost forever.

RESULTS OF PRAYER AND FASTING.

BY J. G. S.

Prayer, that spiritual cord which connects earth with heaven, the creature with his Creator, is next to that of obtaining eternal life, the greatest and grandest privilege bestowed by God upon mortal man. The thought, that He who heard and answered the petitions of his Son when here on earth, has promised to do the same for his adopted children, is enough to fill us with gratitude, and cause us to rejoice continually. No wonder Paul said, "Rejoice ever more. Pray without ceasing." And the "Ask and ye shall receive" had no more force nor deeper meaning to those to whom it was directly spoken, than it has to us. Our gracious Father from whom we receive so many rich blessings, withholds from us many more which he would willingly give did we but ask him aright. One blessing, in particular, which we all so much need, I would speak of and that is Contentment. I do not mean that we should be satisfed with our present condition, tor I think we should ever be striving to make advancement, become more perfect ourselves, and work for the good of others. But what I mean is that whatever befalls us, whatever affiictions come upon us, we should bear all without complaint. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," but our afflictions are but for a moment. And why should we fret, who put our trust in God? Should we not rather praise him, that it is no worse? Can we not rise above this fretful fault-finding condition, up to a higher plain where we can continually view the promised land, and no matter what our lot may be, we can still say: "Thy will be done?" Yes, we can do this; but there is only one way in which it can be accomplished. The ascent at times appears difficult, but with such a Guide as we have, and by putting explicit confidence in Him we will get above all these minor troubles.

We have no right to whine when we come to a place more difficult than some of the others have been; but we have a right to ask for a helping hand. And the more help we receive the stronger we become. And by continually referring to the Book of directions, given us by our Guide, we will be able to avoid many a difficulty.

One of the auxilliaries which should aid us to attain to a more perfect Christian life, and one we fear which is too generally overlooked, is *fasting.* When the disciples of John asked Christ, saying "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" Christ answered, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and *then shall* they fast." And we read in different places that they did so. And we who are waiting for the return of the bridegroom should also fast. It would assist in preparing us for more decided effort in keeping the "old man" down.

Occasional fasting with continual prayer, together with the daily reading of the Word of God, will make the weakest follower to become strong.

Then, since "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth," let us not neglect this great privilege, but when we are about to engage in some work, or when afflicted or in trouble, let us go to God in prayer in *secret*, and he will reward us openly.

REMINSCENCES.

April with its storms of wind, snow, rain and sleet interspersed with an occasional outburst of sunshine, is with us again. Thus we are not only reminded that the unlocked wheel of time is ever revolving, but in the coming of this changeable month is seen a fit emblem of human life. Here we are living in a world filled with the direful effects of sin. On every hand may be felt the storm in all its fury. The end is death. Who is exempt from the ill winds of life? Echo answers, *none.* The pains, the aches, the wails of sorrow forced from broken hearts are only harbingers of the final dissolution. View the checkered scenes of life and how much sunshine have you enjoyed? You answer but little. With the Christian it is prospective. Like the anxious farmer, who impatiently awaits the passing by of the furious storms of spring, that he may enjoy the balmy airs of summer with all its blessing; so the child of God lives "all the days of his appointed time", until his change comes. What a happy change? Can the change in the aerial atmosphere, from stern winter to mid summer be an emblem? Methinks but a faint picture. At the return of summer we see a resurrection of life in the vegetable kingdom. So with the Christian's summer; his deliverence from the chilly blasts of sin. There is a resurrection of life in the everlasting kingdom, and his interests are there. Oh, deep down in my heart I now wonder if any who read this will in that glorious time be compelled to say: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." May God help us to read our destiny from the book of nature, as well as of revelation. "We do all fade as a leaf," was only uttered by the man of God to have us know that there are seasons and times for the garnering of souls as well as the development and final ripening of nature's productions. Then, as the season's reappear and pass away, may each suggest to useful lessons. As the summer clouds will soon be rolling over the living, and the falling rains descend, oh Lord, help us to remember that even those rain drops are tears of mercy, and in everything may we see thy Omnipotence, and be brought thereby nearer unto thee.

We have tried to weave these thoughts together to help us see our present surroundings, and view the prospects in the future. When we see sin on every hand dragging men and women down to everlasting ruin, we feel to appeal in tones of sianic power, to all men everywhere to reform. Let us take warning from nature, from reason, as well as inspiration. Where have we hope? ON JESUS. Blessed consolation! Let the howling winds of satan blow. If our frail bark goes down to the grave He was there. The sting he destroyed, and like the beautiful flowers in the springtime of his mercy, we shall be clothed in glory, no more to go down under the power of death. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 1 Cor. 5: 1.

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UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS.

Has it ever occurred to church members that very much of the influence which the church ought to exert, is destroyed by the absence of unity among themselves? Professing Christians should know that there can but little good grow out of an organization where harmony does not prevail. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." In the church there should be harmony in all things—not only in its management and government, but a perfect agreement in views as to the revealed truth. So far as men are guided by reason alone, the hope of agreement must be abandoned. Men are differently constituted and diversity of opinion will always exist, for that which appears reasonable to one mind, may appear differently to another; but in regard to the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, all should derive their instruction from the same source, and draw their opinion from the infallible word of God. Then is it too much to require of all of the household of faith, that they embrace essentially the same religious sentiment? Paul in his first letter to the church at Corinth, exhorts that people to unity, in the following earnest and eloquent words: "Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In putting their construction on this language, different individuals may, with rectitude of heart, ascribe to it a somewhat different shade of meaning. This will always be so, until we are raised to higher regions of light, and greater Christian purity; but as to the real essence of Paul's meaning in this charge to the church, there seemingly can be but one opinion, and that is the necessity of *oneness* of purpose—unity in sentiment, and also in object of pursuit. If the church would be efficient in disseminating the true principles of the Christian religion, its members must be bound together in the most holy ties of unity, seeking to "be helpers of each other's joy"—striving for their mutual edification, their growth in grace, and a complete preparation for the heavenly state. The influence exerted in this condition of the church, (though free from emotional excitement,) would lead the world to exclaim: "Behold how these Christians love each other." The reasons why such unity should be cherished, are obvious. Every view which can be taken of the Christian church—of its relation to the Creator, its connection with this world and the world to come, impresses upon the mind the solemn truth that there should be no divisions or dissensions among its people; but that all should be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. And not only so, but let all petty jealousies, feelings of envy, heart-burnings and ill-humor among members, be forever banished; and love, peace, joy and a desire for each others spiritual and temporal welfare, take the place. Then will the church "arise and shine, her light being come."—Selected by M. HORNER.

When you fret and fume at the petty ills of life, remember that the wheels which go round without creaking last longest.

REASON vs THE SWORD.

"Reasoning at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

With all his reasoning powers, in ages which are past and up to the present time, with a few honorable exceptions the rulers of the governments of this world, have made very little advance beyond the brute creation in their mode of trying to settle disputes. It is a question of might and not of right, a question of muscle and not of mind, a question of force and not of reason.

Man shows that he has mind and reason, in the invention and use of implements for the destruction of his fellows, but he shows a wonderful lack of wisdom in the right use of these God given faculties when he can rise no higher than the brute creation in settling disputes by fighting instead of reasoning.

In all disputes between nations which claim to be civilized, both sides are endued with the faculty of reason, and common sense, and might if they were willing to do so to settle their disputes by mutual agreement, or by arbitration, with far more credit to themselves and the race than by a resort to the unreasonable and uncertain and expensive arbitrament of war.

Arbitration has been tried in a sufficient number of cases within the last four or five decades, to prove that it is practical and far better every way than war for settling matters of dispute. Some of the most eminent statesmen on both sides of the Atlantic are strongly committed to the principle of arbitration.

"According to appointment, the Appanoose church met, preparatory to D. M. Business, was disposed of harmoniously. D. B, Barnhart and F. Sherfy, delegates to D. M; D. B. Barnhart delegate to A. M., no queries. A good deal of dissatisfaction prevails among the order-loving members in consequence of the disorder that is growing in this (N. E.) District of Kansas, in wearing apparel, hair and beard. A strange brother would not be able to recognize one-half of the Brethren in some of the churches, by their appearance. This state of affairs is deplorable and we fear the result. We pray God to be with and strengthen our able brethren at next A. M. that we may have a better state of affairs."—W. M. WISE.

This looking to A. M. for authority and power looks to be as dangerous as the trouble our brother refers to. What is wrong with N. E. Kansas? Have the Brethren there lost their Bibles? If not, they have all the power they need, for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Carry out its teachings and you need nothing more. If preaching and living the pure Gospel will not bring the order you desire, all the decisions that A. M. can make, will not help you. As desirable as plainness and order is, a truly converted and sanctified heart is still more desirable. Get the heart—the inside—right first, and the outside will come, by careful Gospel teaching, as sure as wool grows on a sheep's back.—The sheep is made first and the wool grows upon it because it is a sheep. So should it be with the Christian and his apparel. We admire plainness and modest apparel, and are persuaded that the recognized order of the Brethren, in dress, is neat, comfortable and proper, and see no reason why it should not be more generally adopted. But to get decisions from A. M., with a view of enforcing them, will never accomplish the object. We must deal with men and women as rational and intelligent beings. Teach them the Gospel order. Teach it in the spirit of love, and it does seem to us that every child of God will be willing to lay aside the garb of sin and of the world and accept that which becomes the new creature in Christ Jesus. In the Scriptures, sinners and worldlings are spoken of as goats and wolves. When converted, they are then called sheep, or are likened to sheep. Now, if we can understand the change necessary to convert a wolf or goat to a sheep, we can more fully understand the change necessary to convert a sinner into a child of God. Think of it. Who can solve the problem?—H. B. B. in *Messenger.*

"COME!"

"Come!" I have have heard that in the desert. When the caravans are in want of water, they are accustomed to send on a camel with its rider some distance in advance; then after a little space follows another; and then at short intervals another. As soon as the first man finds water, almost before he stoops down to drink, he shouts aloud, "Come!" The next one hearing the voice repeats the word, "Come!" while the nearest again takes up the cry, "Come!" until the whole wilderness echoes with the word "Come!" So in that verse the Spirit and bride say the first of all "Come!" then "let him that heareth say Come, and whosoever is athirst let him come and take of the waters of life freely.'"—*Spurgeon.*